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ABSTRACT

Designed as an information document, this report describes the activities of the Council in facilitating the settlement of migrant workers' children in the compulsory schooling systems of host countries. Experimental classes are discussed in terms of the basic aims of the integration of migrant children through language learning, maintenance of their own language and culture, and solutions of psychological, sociological, and educational problems. School records are examined in terms of their intended function to overcome difficulties in obtaining information on the health and school career of migrant children. A four-year programme for training teachers is outlined, with its aim being to make teachers more aware of the social, psychological, cultural, and educational problems faced by migrants, so as to help children adjust to the new cultural environment without losing contact with their original environment. Action on helping migrants learn the language of the host country is examined by review of experiments being conducted to promote linguistic education and efforts to design the most suitable objectives and methods of language study. Recent recommendations and resolutions are discussed, which stress the continued need for improvement in general and specific areas of migrant education measures. (JD)

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONTRIBUTION TO THE REPORT ON MIGRANTS' EDUCATION

In response to the request made at the Tenth Session of the Standing Conference in 1977 (Resolution No. 1), the following report on the activities of the Council of Europe concerned with the education of migrants is presented for information for the preparation of the Eleventh Session :

Since the Council of Europe is constantly concerned with the safeguard of fundamental human values and the support of social and economic progress, that is the general framework within which the Council's work on behalf of migrant workers is undertaken.

It is hardly necessary to point out to what extent the human and social aspects of the situation of these workers, who leave their country to look for employment abroad, raise problems for the countries of immigration as regards living and working conditions and for the countries of origin as regards re-settling them when they return "home".

As the education of migrant children is one of the most important aspects of the European cooperation programme initiated by the Council of Europe, special measures have been taken in this field in order to prevent the children of migrant workers from becoming in their turn a new generation of migrants.

It was with a view to guaranteeing by laws or regulations the exercise of the right of migrant workers' children to school education that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution (70) 35 on the subject.

Operationally, attempts have been made to facilitate the settlement of migrant workers' children in the normal compulsory schooling system of host countries by the creation of "experimental classes", which are now included among the permanent intergovernmental activities of the Council of Europe.

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1. EXPERIMENTAL CLASSES FOR CHILDREN OF MIGRANT WORKERS

This operational activity of the Council of Europe was started in 1972. Its aim is to settle migrants' children into the school system and into the host society in general.

Difficulties can arise when an effort is being made at the same time to preserve an essential balance between the values of the country of origin and those of the host country. The major difficulties which have to be faced concern study courses, teacher training, the choice of teaching material, the breakdown of pupils by age-group and level of learning, and teaching methods. These experiments have also provided an opportunity to study problems concerning the assessment of results and the administration of these classes.

Experimental classes are subsidised by the Council of Europe. This means that one of the basic recommendations of Resolution (70) 35 (*) has been implemented at intergovernmental level.

In order to gain a better understanding of the goals to be attained, it is not without interest to recall the basic aims which the Council of Europe has set itself in organising special experimental classes for the children of migrant workers :

a. integration of these children into the compulsory education system of the host country through learning that country's language ;

b. keeping up their knowledge of the language and culture of the country of origin with an ultimate two-fold aim : first, to prevent a lack of communication with parents where the latter have difficulty in understanding or assimilating the language of the host country, and secondly, to encourage their resettlement into the society of their home countries should they return there ;

c. experimenting with the solutions applied to the different psychological, sociological and educational problems facing children from the most varied ethnic backgrounds (social and cultural differences, the uprooting typical of migrants, marked gaps in linguistic knowledge).

At the end of the school year, each of the organisations responsible for an experimental class reports to the Secretariat of the Council of Europe on the criteria adopted, the methods applied and the problems encountered. These reports, published by the Council of Europe, are available to any organisations or persons interested, who are given the opportunity of finding out about experiments designed to achieve the twin objectives of settling the children into the school system of the host country and safeguarding the essential features of the cultural and linguistic heritage of their home country.

(*) " 5. Possibly to establish, if need be, in cooperation with the authorities of the countries concerned, in areas where a sufficient number of migrant workers' families live, special classes or courses designed to assist the gradual integration of the children into the normal classes of the country of immigration, in particular by helping them to learn the language of that country ; children of migrant workers should be taught in special classes or attend special courses for the shortest time strictly necessary."

In order to discover the most suitable methodology through a comparison of the methods applied in the different classes, the need has been accepted in principle for a comparative study of the reports, with a view of establishing a model of experimental classes for children of migrant workers for the use of those engaged in this type of work in member countries.

Whilst the conclusions of the study tend towards recognition that the results achieved by these classes have been positive, a number of pertinent observations have been made, containing constructive proposals for improving both methods and results.

Any measures concerning the children of migrant workers ought indeed, if they are to be really effective, to begin with an analysis of the socio-economic conditions of migrant families which have to be taken into account.

In any event, it is reasonable to suppose that these assessments and ideas, originating in a variety of different experiments, will contribute towards making the authorities concerned in the member countries of the Council of Europe aware of the problems of foreign pupils, which undoubtedly derive from the socio-cultural, psychological and educational features of the human environment where they live. This awareness should be cultivated by means of a system of information, education and participation at European level, so that the organisation of experimental classes can achieve a measure of social integration while safeguarding the dignity of the individual.

In this context, an expert has been engaged to assess the various methods used so far in organising and operating experimental classes, with a view to recommending methods likely to increase the effectiveness of this action initiated by the Council of Europe.

2. SCHOOL RECORD

As mentioned in the previous report, on 10 March 1976, the Committee of Ministers, in its Resolution (76) 12, adopted "the School Career and Health Record for Children Attending School Abroad", the main aim of which is to overcome the difficulties encountered in obtaining objective information on the school career of migrant children, often due to the diversity of school systems in Europe.

The school record contains a summary of the knowledge and aptitudes of the child, with a short analysis of previous schooling, a table showing a number of personal characteristics and aptitudes, information concerning the parents and details of vaccinations and state of health, the latter, on account of their confidential nature, supplied on a detachable sheet. It is designed to be used during the period of compulsory schooling and is intended to facilitate the assimilation of children in a new system of education, both on arrival in the country of immigration and on their return to their home country ; the document must accompany the child of a migrant worker on any move from one country to another.

The record is made available in a simple and standardised form, made out in ten languages (French, English, German, Italian, Turkish, Dutch, Swedish, Greek, Portuguese and Spanish) to national authorities, who are then responsible for its reproduction and distribution. It is to be filled in by the teacher or school authorities of the country of origin and, when the pupil arrives in his new school, it is handed over to his new teacher or to the school authorities of the host country.

The school authorities in both countries have been asked to cooperate closely with the consular authorities of other countries or with any other institution concerned, with a view to facilitating the practical use of the record, and in particular to give assistance to the parents of the child wherever necessary.

In response to Resolution (76) 12, a number of member countries have already used the record to facilitate the integration of children into the compulsory school system of host countries.

In Belgium, the Ministry of Education has decided to distribute the record to the competent authorities.

In Denmark, the authorities are already using and distributing the record, which is compulsory for all children, including Danish children going abroad ; they have already produced translations of the record in Serbo-Croat, Arabic and Urdu.

In France, the Ministry of Education, through its ministerial circular No. 78-00 of 5 January 1978, has provided for compulsory use of the record starting in the school year 1978-79.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, all the Länder, except for Baden,Württemberg, have agreed to take part in experimenting with the use of the record. The Länder will decide individually on the organisation and extent of the experiment, which may be limited to certain districts.

In Italy, the authorities adopted the record in a circular letter published in the Official Bulletin of the Italian Ministry of Education (No. 9-10, part 1, 3rd supplement of 3-10 March 1977).

In Luxembourg, the authorities consider that the record constitutes a very useful instrument for the integration of foreign children. Although at this stage it is only being used for the latter, it is nevertheless proposed that it should be eventually extended to native children going abroad.

In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Education and Science has decided to make experimental use of the record during the school year 1978-79.

In Switzerland, the Conference of Secretaries General of the Swiss cantons has proposed introducing the school record for children who have attended school in a foreign country. As a result the government of the canton Basel-Stadt has issued regulations concerning the school record ; this Council of Europe instrument will accordingly be used alongside the Swiss record.

In addition, Finland, which is a party to the European Cultural Convention, has decided to have the school record translated into Finnish and to distribute it to the authorities concerned.

It is worth recalling the keen interest shown by the Commission of the European Communities and more in particular by its Education Committee in the initiative of the Council of Europe, concerning the creation of this school career and health record.

Since, under the terms of Resolution (76) 12, an assessment of the trial period will have to be made, one may look forward to fruitful cooperation in this field between the Council of Europe and the Brussels Commission.

3. THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS FOR THE CHILDREN OF MIGRANTS

Everyone is aware nowadays of the difficulties which schools have to face as a result of migratory movements on a European scale. For this reason, the ad hoc Conference on the Education of Migrants, held in Strasbourg in November 1974 under the joint auspices of the Council of Europe and the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education, paid particular attention to the training and recruitment of teachers of migrant children.

In the light of the recommendations of the ad hoc Conference and of those contained in Resolution No. 2 of the Ninth Session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education, the CCC, in 1977, launched a four-year programme on "the training of teachers responsible for the education of migrant workers' children". It is in two parts :

1. analysis of the training provided for teachers responsible for the education of migrants' children in the receiving countries ;
2. the compilation, for these teachers, of information dossiers on the culture, civilisation and educational systems of emigration and immigration countries.

The aims of these two parts of the programme are closely linked. The object is to make teacher training specialists, teachers and future teachers aware of the social, psychological, cultural and educational problems faced by migrants, so that they can help children to adjust to their new cultural environment, without losing the benefits of contact with their original cultural environment.

In the course of their work on analysis of the training provided in receiving countries for teachers from immigration and emigration countries, the Council of Europe experts visited eight pilot experiments in six countries (France, Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) in 1977. The summarised version of their analyses, to be published in 1979, will try to assess the quality and impact of the inter-cultural training provided in each of the projects visited and to make proposals for carrying out training programmes. The information dossiers are themselves designed to supplement these programmes.

For this purpose, they will consist of three sections :

- the first will include data on the probable social and cultural situation of migrants and their children in their own countries, and on the organisation of schooling in those countries ;

- the second will describe the normal social and cultural situation of natives of the host country, as well as its schooling system ;
- the third will seek to identify the problems of migrants, and particularly children, in the host country.

The first part will thus be aimed at teachers in the host country, the second at teachers in the country of origin, and the third expressly at both.

When this work has been completed, the CCC plans, in 1979-80, to launch experimental in-service training courses to enable teachers, teacher-training specialists and other staff concerned with the education of migrant workers' children to benefit directly from the ideas and experience of other CCC member States.

In 1979, the Council of Europe will start producing, on a joint European basis, audio-visual material (films, video-cassettes, slides) for teacher training specialists and staff concerned with the education of migrant workers' children.

4, LANGUAGE LEARNING

Learning of the language of a host country is considered to be an indispensable stage in the process enabling migrant workers and their families to adapt and settle into their new environment.

The Committee of Ministers, in Resolution (68) 18, invited member governments to :

"... make greater efforts to enable all migrant workers who so desire to learn the language of the reception country".

The Council of Europe for its part has taken action on some of the suggestions contained in this resolution, by conducting from 1970 onwards,with the cooperation of specialised organisations, experiments in teaching languages to migrant workers in various immigration and emigration countries.

Resolution (68) 18 was confirmed by the European Ministers of Education who, in Stockholm in 1975, reaffirmed the need to promote the linguistic education of migrants and their families (*).

Thus, in the framework of the Council of Europe "modern languages" project, three pilot projects have been launched in Sweden, France and the Federal Republic of Germany in 1978. The aim of these projects is to analyse the communication needs of migrant workers and their families in order to design the most suitable objectives and methods of language study.

The first practical results obtained from the three current pilot projects will be examined in the course of a colloquy to be held in Sweden in 1979.

(*) Resolution No. 2 of the Ninth Session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education (Stockholm, June 1975)

5. INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND THE CONFERENCE OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF EUROPE

These initiatives, which have been very attentively considered by a number of member States, have been supported by other Council of Europe bodies.

In September 1976, the Parliamentary Assembly adopted Recommendation 736 (1976) on measures to be taken for the education and cultural development of migrants, thus supporting the action recommended in this sphere by the Ninth Session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education.

More recently, the Assembly has studied the relatively new problem of second generation migrants, who are constituting a demographic factor of growing importance for immigration countries.

Recommendation 841 (1978), adopted on 30 September 1978, emphasises that the case of second generation migrants presents some original features, as most young migrants keep their parents' citizenship yet belong to two societies and cultures. This causes problems where their education and vocational training as well as their legal status are concerned.

In its recommendation, the Assembly therefore suggests a series of special measures for young migrants, to be implemented alongside more general measures for the benefit of young people and migrant workers.

Among the specific measures, the Parliamentary Assembly has asked particularly for a greater effort to be made in the field of education (pre-schooling, schooling and vocational training), as it has been observed that failures at work and in vocational training are merely an aggravation of earlier failures at school.

For the implementation of the measures in favour of young migrants, it has also recommended that the emigration countries should cooperate with the host countries.

The Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe has in the past devoted considerable attention to the problem of education for migrants, most notably in its Resolution 85 (1976) on the measures to be taken to assist migrant workers concerning housing, schooling of their children and civil and political rights. It is therefore not surprising that more recently when dealing with wider questions it has continued to show its awareness of and concern for this aspect of the problem.

In the Declaration of Principles concerning Cultural Activity at Local and Regional Levels appended to Resolution 97 (1978) on the Role and Responsibility of Local and Regional Authorities in Cultural Matters, which was adopted at the 13th Session of the Conference, it is stressed that "the cultural development of migrants, so that they can participate in the society in which they live and maintain contact with their country of origin, should be a permanent objective of the cultural policy of regions and local authorities".

The contribution of the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe to the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Local Government (Stockholm, 7-8 September 1978), which was adopted by the CLRAE in its Resolution 101 (1978) on the Participation of the Individual in Local Public Life, has a section devoted to participation by immigrants in local affairs.

This section points out amongst other things the need for educational measures (including a better command of the language) to promote participation by migrants. It urges that considerable attention should be given to bi-cultural education. This helps to make it possible for the foreign workers and their children to maintain their own identity and character in the community in which they live. At the same time, a number of conditions are created which enable them to return without difficulty to their country of origin.